

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 03540 261240Z
ACTION NEA-10

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-----091389 261243Z /45

R 261057Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2098
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 3540

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE, JO, SY
SUBJECT: TALK OF A COUP PLOT IN JORDAN

REF: BEIRUT 2995

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES INFO FROM BEIRUT IN REFTEL. WE HOWEVER
FIND ALLEGATION HIGHLY IMPLAUSIBLE THAT ROYAL COURT CHIEF SHARAF
WROTE TO ABU JAWDEH "COMPLAINING THAT THE U.S. IS WORKING
AGAINST THE REGIME OF KING HUSSEIN."

2. ON SUBSTANCE, SHARAF ACCOMPANIED KING ON U.S. VISIT AND,
LIKE THE KING, WAS GREATLY PLEASED AND REASSURED BY MANIFEST-
ATIONS OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR KING HUSSEIN DURING VISIT. SHARAF
HAS CONSISTENTLY RE-ECHOED THESE SENTIMENTS IN MEETINGS WITH
AMBASSADOR SINCE THAT TIME.

3. WE ALSO FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT AN EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT
SUCH AS SHARAF WOULD BE SO INDISCREET AS TO INCLUDE IN A LETTER
SUCH SENSITIVE INFORMATION AS WAS ASCRIBED TO HIM.

4. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE ABU JAWDEH IS A RESPECTED JOURNALIST WE
PRESUME NOT GIVEN TO OUTRIGHT FABRICATION. IF SO, OUR ONLY
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CONCEIVABLE WAY TO EXPLAIN CANARD ATTRIBUTED TO SHARAF IS THAT
IT SOMEHOW AROSE FROM DISTORTED ACCOUNT BY SHARAF OF HIS FEAR
OF THE POLICIES OF HIS RIVAL, FORMER PM ZAYD RIFAI. SHARAF COULD
HAVE COMPLAINED THAT RIFAI'S PRO-SYRIAN POLICIES AND ADVOCACY
OF A JORDANIAN/SYRIAN CONFEDERATION COULD, IF ALLOWED TO PREVAIL,
ULTIMATELY UNDERMINE THE INTEGRITY OF KING HUSSEIN'S REGIME.
WHERE SHARAF WOULD GET AN AMERICAN CONNECTION IN ALL THIS

MYSTIFIES US, OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT RIFAI IS ACTIVE POLITICIAN, GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE CLOSE TO USG AND MAY WELL RETURN AS THE NEXT GOJ PRIME MINISTER.

5. WE ARE INCLINED TO ASCRIBE BOTH ABU JAWDEH ALLEGATIONS AND FALSE RUMORS (PARA. 2 REFTTEL) OF LAT MAY ANTI-REGIME COUP PLOT (AMMAN 3412) TO PLO, WHICH PERIODICALLY LIKES TO SOW DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN ABOUT STABILITY OF KING HUSSEIN'S REGIME. PLO UNDOUBTEDLY UNHAPPY OVER RECENT USG STATEMENTS THAT WE FAVOR ASSOCIATION OF PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WITH JORDAN AS WELL AS WITH KING HUSSEIN'S RECENT EMPHASIS ON PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION (AS OPPOSED TO PROMOTING PLO AS LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN INTERESTS). WE NOTE JUNE 23 VOICE OF PALESTINE MENTION OF PLO CHIEF ARAFAT'S CHARGE THAT JORDANIANS ARE MEDDLING IN PALESTINIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY RECENT GOJ CONTACTS WITH MISBAH BUDAYRI (PLA CHIEF DISCREDITED BY PLO) AND BY SOME RECENT (RELATIVELY INNOCUOUS) REMARKS BY JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER BADRAN ON JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN RELATIONS. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THIS IS FIRST VOICE OF PALESTINE ATTACK ON GOJ IN SEVERAL MONTHS AND MAY BE PART OF ANTI-KING HUSSEIN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN OF WHICH ALLEGATIONS CITED BY EMBASSY BEIRUT MAY ALSO PLAY A PART.
PICKERING

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